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VOLUME 50 NUMBER 1 PAGES 1 - 36 JANUARY - MARCH 2016

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With  
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Founded 1879 -

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Fenja Brodo

**Objectives of the Club:** To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Club Publications:** THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Membership Fees:** Individual (yearly) \$40

Family (yearly) \$45

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Hard copy of Canadian Field-Naturalist \$30

Subscriptions to Trail & Landscape:

(libraries and institutions): \$40 per year (volume)

Postage for U.S. and other foreign countries please add \$7

Single copies of recent issues: \$7 each postpaid

Index to Vols. 1 - 20: \$10 postpaid.

**Membership application, correspondence:**

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Views expressed in *Trail & Landscape* are not necessarily those of the OFNC

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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by  
The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club  
Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

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# Welcome New Members

## **Ottawa Area**

Carol Barnard  
Suzanne Belzile  
Jonathan Browne  
Nellie Carnelos  
Mela Constantinidis  
Charlotte Foster  
Anna Herman  
Colleen McKee  
Betty Michalowski  
Elizabeth Moore & Family  
Thanh-Dung Nguyen & Family  
Mary O'Connor & Family  
Elisabeth Salm & Family  
Arnet Sheppard  
Amy Steele  
Jessica Thibcau  
Andrew Paul Williams & Family  
Natasha Zinkie

## **Gatineau Area**

Ken Berris & Family

## **British Columbia**

Hillary Downham & Family

Henry Steger  
Chair, Membership Committee  
November 2015

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# News from the Board

*Fenja Brodo, President<sup>1</sup>*



*Our new sign on Prince of Wales Drive. Photo by Mark Brenchley.*

Two thousand fifteen was a very eventful year for our Club; we have accomplished much that I wish to tell you about.

You may know that we received an unexpected and very generous bequest from the estate of a former member, Violetta Czasak. This has allowed us to support several

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<sup>1</sup> 613-723-2054; [fbrodo@sympatico.ca](mailto:fbrodo@sympatico.ca).

important ventures as well as to renovate the Interpretative Centre at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. The latter is essentially our Club house, the place where we hold our Board and committee meetings as well as workshops and other events. A new paint job and a few new pieces of furniture have made a big difference as has our collective effort to clean-up and throw out accumulated stuff that was no longer needed.

We helped sponsor the 2015 Bird Fair at Andrew Haydon Park on May 30, organized by Nature Canada by giving them \$3,000 towards this popular and well-attended event. We also had a presence at this fair—members of our Education and Publicity Committee staffed our booth and promoted our Club.

The Innis Point Bird Observatory (IPBO) had a shortfall so we covered the cost for them to hire a bird bander for the spring migration in 2016. Several of our members are also active in the IPBO.

The Macoun Field Club serves the interests of our junior naturalists, from 8-18yrs., by holding meetings and having outdoor programs on Saturdays throughout the school year. The OFNC also supports youth by sending delegates to the Ottawa Regional Science Fair to award prizes to students exhibiting superior knowledge of some aspect of natural history. We had two winners in 2015. For the third year in a row, we sponsored a teenager (not necessarily with connections to our Club) to attend the Youth Summit organized by Ontario Nature to foster leadership regarding conservation issues.

Our very active Conservation Committee achieved victory for Snapping Turtles by getting the city to cut down the curbs at Mud Lake and so allowing the hatchlings to negotiate their way from mud to water.

A new initiative was to support local natural science research projects especially, but not limited to, students and amateurs. Eight such projects were approved by the Research Grants Committee in 2015. Applications for this are currently being accepted (deadline 15 January 2016).

Safe Wings Ottawa is another new initiative that we are immensely proud of. This committee addresses the bird-building collision problem by working with building owners to turn down the lights during migration seasons and scooping up injured birds for rehabilitation and dead birds as evidence that we do indeed have a big problem in Ottawa.

At the Fletcher Wildlife Garden, the Backyard Garden benefited from a bit of redesigning and the William J. "Bill" Cody Fern Trail was officially opened. The

Butterfly Meadow flourished with a lot of help from volunteers and the June Native Plant Sale was the best ever. Invasive species are still a big problem.

Because of being the recipient of a big bequest we were able to contribute significantly towards the purchase and thus the preservation of ecologically important pieces of land. In 2014 we gave \$200,000 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada towards the purchase of the Gervais property which includes underground caves in a near pristine woodland setting on the Ottawa River near Westmeath. We had a special OFNC outing to this estate in 2015 so that our members could appreciate this lovely property and know that we are helping to preserve it for future generations of naturalists. We also donated \$5,000 to Ontario Nature to help with the purchase of land at Lost Bay, Ontario.

We surveyed our members with the help of a local communications consulting firm. We learned much about your interests and preferred ways that you wish to be contacted. The main upshot of that exercise is that a committee is now actively working on a new and improved website that should be easier to navigate. This should be up and running in 2016.

All this is to say that many, many members helped to make all those things that I mentioned (and more) happen. We always have room for more participants on almost every committee and in every aspect of our Club, including finance. New people bring new ideas and that is how we grow. Are you interested in getting more involved? Call or write me or anybody on our Board and we can together find a place for you to enjoy yourself while helping our Club.

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## Thanks for sponsoring me, OFNC!

Dear OFNC,

I would like to thank you for sponsoring me for the Ontario Nature Youth Summit in Orillia. I had an amazing time and learned so much during my weekend by the lake!

I really wanted to go to the summit because I felt that I needed to involve myself in the community more. I am new to the OFNC, and before this group I knew of no group or community that was interested in nature.



This summit has introduced me to Ontario Nature, which is an amazing organization that I look forward to being involved with in the future. I also got to meet loads of bright young naturalists, which was very refreshing and inspiring. I was pleasantly surprised that there are so many other young people that want to make a difference. The summit has given me the opportunity to connect with these people, discuss environmental issues and to work with them to find solutions to those issues.

I really enjoyed myself and learned about so many things; birds, herps, plants, astronomy, insects, and much more! Here are some of my highlights.

On the first day, we were lucky enough to be able to hold many of Ontario's reptiles. I learned so much that night; I had no idea we had so many types of snakes and turtles! We learned about eastern fox snakes, hog-nosed snakes, blue racers, spotted turtles, wood turtles, and Blanding's turtle, among others. My favourite was the hog-nosed snake, an incredible species that is, unfortunately, threatened.

I learned about sunspots, and got to see some close up. There was an astronomer at the summit, and he had brought his telescope to give us our first look at Saturn. He had told us his first time seeing Saturn is exactly what got him hooked on astronomy. You could clearly see the rings, and even one of its moons! It really was an amazing sight.

I met an amazing man called Skid Crease. He gave an inspiring (and entertaining!) presentation, and I had the pleasure of sitting with him during lunch the next day. It was incredible to be able to talk to someone who isn't afraid to speak his mind, or to take action. Whether it's for a healthy environment or for other causes, we need more people like him.

Finally, I got my 200<sup>th</sup> bird at the summit! Each morning, there was a nice little hike offered by some of the organizers of the summit. I got to see a lot of familiar (but no less exiting) birds, and my first blue-headed vireo! What a great way to start the day.

I am going to try to learn more about the subjects that were covered at the summit. The summit has inspired me to report (and look for!) reptiles and amphibians, learn to ID native plants, and keep an eye on the sky. I really enjoyed being introduced to so many different fields!

Coming back from the summit, I have decided to make an environmental club at my school for next year. I talked to so many young naturalists who had successful clubs, and they have inspired me to do the same.



Thank you so much for this experience. The summit has taught me so much, and I have met so many interesting people. It really was an incredible experience that I will never forget.

Sincerely,  
Sophie Roy

**Editors Note:** Originally published on the OFNC website. It is included here for those who do not do not regularly visit the Club website.

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## Introducing the OFNC Research Grant Program to Support Local Natural Sciences Research

*David Seburn*

In March 2015, the OFNC Board of Directors approved a motion that the Club establish an OFNC Research Grant program to support field-based natural science research projects in eastern Ontario and western Quebec. This new fund aligns perfectly with one of the main goals of the OFNC: to encourage investigation, publish the results of research in all fields of natural history, and diffuse the information as widely as possible. A total of \$15,000 is available for research projects each year. The funding must go to individuals, not organizations, and the funding cannot be used for salary. The research fund is overseen by the OFNC Publications Committee. The call for funding for the 2016 field season, with a deadline of 15 January 2016, is in this issue of *Trail & Landscape* and posted on the OFNC website. Funding announcements will be made in the spring.

The Club's inaugural call for proposals was sent out widely in April in 2015 with a deadline of 15 May for submitting a proposal. Eleven proposals were received, which was an encouraging response to this new program. A small subcommittee chaired by Tony Gaston convened, reviewed all proposals, and recommended funding eight of them for a total of \$15,000. The funding recommendations were submitted to the Board of Directors, who approved all of them. The following projects, listed in alphabetical order, were funded this year:

1. Chelsey Blackman, M.Sc. candidate, Carleton University. Host range of *Lilioceris lili* and ability of biocontrol agent *Tetrastichus seiifer* to find pests on

novel hosts.

2. Jean Faubert, Société québécoise de bryologie. Flore du parc de la Gatineau/ Gatineau Park.
3. Henri Goulet and P.T. Dang, Biodiversity Conservancy International. Study of the Ghost Tiger Beetle (*Ellipsiptera lepida*) population in the Pinhey Sand Dunes.
4. Stephanie Haas, M.Sc. candidate, University of Ottawa. How do environment and host phylogeny influence mite communities on bumblebee species?
5. William Halliday, Ph.D. candidate, University of Ottawa. What ecological factors are most important to habitat selection by Common Gartersnakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) in the National Capital Region?
6. Marry Ann Perron, M.Sc. candidate, University of Ottawa. Biodiversity in urban stormwater management ponds: effects of pond age and water quality.
7. David Seburn, Seburn Ecological Services. Have salamanders declined in eastern Ontario?
8. Richard Webster, postdoctoral fellow, Carleton University and Jim des Rivières, independent researcher. Evidence-based moth catching: designing small, inexpensive and low energy lights for mothing.

As a condition of receiving support from the OFNC Research Fund, all grant recipients are expected to submit a summary of their work for publication in *Trail & Landscape*, so stay tuned to learn about the results of these exciting and important local research projects.

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## Information about Snake Hibernacula in the Ottawa-Gatineau Area

Hello Ottawa Field-Naturalists.

My name is William Halliday and I am a PhD student at the University of Ottawa. As part of my PhD research, I am examining the habitat selection behaviour of eastern garter snakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*). I'm currently looking for hibernating sites (hibernacula) of garter snakes in Ottawa and Gatineau. Since I am new to the area, I have not yet had the time to discover these sites, I'm seeking help of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists to find any snake hibernacula in the area. If you know of any snake hibernacula in the area, please email me at [whall075@uottawa.ca](mailto:whall075@uottawa.ca) or call me at 613-793-1579.

Thanks for your help

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# Habitat selection by Common Gartersnakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) in the National Capital Region: What makes a habitat suitable?

William D. Halliday<sup>1</sup>

All animals decide where to live based on the suitability of the available habitats. The suitability of a habitat is different for every species, and depends on many different factors, including what the animal eats, their tolerance to environmental conditions, and even their ability to evade predators. Understanding the habitat suitability of a species is not only interesting from a natural history perspective, but is also crucial knowledge for the conservation and management of that species (Morris 2003).

Habitat selection by snakes in the National Capital Region is interesting because these snakes are near the northern edge of their geographical range, and must deal with decreased environmental temperatures. Snakes are cold-blooded (also known as ectotherms), and must use the temperatures available in the environment to maintain their internal body temperature at levels that are optimal for different bodily functions. Warm-blooded (endotherms) animals, like humans, automatically maintain their body at a specific temperature; cold-blooded animals attempt to maintain their body temperature by actively seeking warm or cold areas. Common Gartersnakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*; Figure 1), for example, prefer body temperatures between 25 and 30°C. Since these temperatures are only reached in the middle of the day during the warmest months of the year, gartersnakes must spend time basking to increase their body temperature to these preferred levels. Since temperature is so important to snakes living near the northern edge of their range, it is often considered the most important factor of habitat suitability for northern snakes (Brown and Weatherhead 2000; Blouin-Demers and Weatherhead 2001a; Row and Blouin-Demers 2006). Factors that are important for other species that are not limited by temperature include the quantity of food (e.g., Morris and MacEachern 2010),

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Biology, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.



*Figure 1. Female Common Gartersnake (Thamnophis sirtalis) in an experimental enclosure in Pontiac County, Québec.*

abundance of predators (e.g., Gilliam and Fraser 1987), and the abundance of competitors (Halliday and Blouin-Demers 2014). The purpose of my research was to examine habitat selection by northern snakes in the National Capital Region, and to determine which factors of habitat suitability were most important. I used an observational study at Stony Swamp, part of the National Capital Commission Greenbelt, in 2014 and 2015, and two separate manipulative experiments in enclosures in Pontiac County, Québec, in 2014 and 2015. The goal of my observational study was to see how snakes naturally use habitats, and to see how their habitat use varies according to naturally available habitat type and food abundance. Habitat type has large implications for the temperature that a snake can maintain. I had two goals for my manipulative experiments: first, to determine if snakes will use colder forest habitat if competition in the warm field habitat is high; and second, to determine if habitat selection by snakes is related to the abundance of food.

In my observational study, I set up six 1-hectare study grids in wetlands near the Lime Kiln Trail in Stony Swamp in June 2014. I placed 25 cover objects on each grid in order to create artificial shelters that snakes could use (Halliday and Blouin-

Demers 2015). I surveyed each grid four times between June and August in both 2014 and 2015. During each survey, my field assistants and I systematically walked back and forth across each grid looking for snakes and checking under cover objects. We captured each snake that we encountered by hand, and measured its body length, mass, and body temperature, gave it a unique mark in order to identify different individuals, and released it where we caught it. We also counted the number of frogs we encountered on every survey. Finally, we classified the habitats on each grid based on the predominant vegetation, height of vegetation, area covered by water, and depth of the water.

In 2014, I captured 20 Common Gartersnakes, nine Northern Red-bellied Snakes (*Storeria occipitomaculata*), two Northern Watersnakes (*Nerodia sipedon*), and one Eastern Milksnake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*). In 2015, I captured over 30 gartersnakes, two red-bellied snakes, one watersnake, and one milksnake. I also encountered one Northern Ring-necked Snake (*Diadophis punctatus*) when walking between my study grids in 2015. Since gartersnakes are the only snake species that I caught frequently, I will only discuss trends for gartersnakes for the remainder of this article.

Gartersnakes showed a preference for habitats with less water and more grass, ferns, or shrubs, and generally avoided cattails and forests. Two of my grids overlapped with cedar forests that had been burned in a forest fire a few years ago, and were devoid of any canopy cover. Gartersnakes showed a very strong preference for these post-fire habitats. The distribution of gartersnakes was weakly related to areas with more Northern Leopard Frogs (*Lithobates pipiens*) in 2014, but not in 2015. However, we sighted over 140 leopard frogs in 2014, but only 17 in 2015. This collapse in the leopard frog population likely explains why the distribution of gartersnakes was not related to frog distribution in 2015. These results demonstrate that habitat structure (vegetation type and amount of water) and temperature are both important to habitat selection by gartersnakes because gartersnakes showed a strong preference for warm habitats (with low canopy cover and medium-height vegetation) and areas with little water. However, the location of food was only slightly important one year, and not at all the next year, which implies that the location of food is not as important as habitat structure or temperature to habitat selection by gartersnakes.

In my first manipulative experiment, I built experimental enclosures that included both field and forest habitats (Figure 2). A field habitat was, on average, 10°C warmer than a forest habitat. I placed different population sizes of gartersnakes in these enclosures in order to manipulate the level of competition between snakes, and added earthworms to either the field or the forest habitat. In this way, I controlled





*Figure 2. Experimental enclosures for habitat selection experiments with Common Gartersnakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) in Pontiac County, Québec, that were half in field habitat and half in forest habitat.*

the availability of habitats (field or forest) that differ in temperature, and manipulated the location of food and the level of competition. Gartersnakes showed a strong preference for field over forest habitat, regardless of where the food was located or the level of competition. However, some gartersnakes did begin to use the forest when competition was high and food was also more abundant in the forest. Gartersnakes therefore show a strong preference for warm habitats, and will only use cool habitats when there is increased competition in the warm habitat and there is abundant food in the cool habitat.

In my second manipulative experiment, I built experimental enclosures in the field habitat and placed different abundances of gartersnakes in each enclosure. I then added earthworms to one side of each enclosure to see if the distribution of snakes would match the location of food within the enclosures, and if patterns of habitat selection would change as population size, and therefore competition, changed. I rotated the location of the earthworms throughout the experiment. Gartersnakes showed a weak preference for the side of the enclosure with increased food when it was near favourable microhabitats, such as thick vegetation. Patterns of habitat selection were not affected by population size. The distribution of gartersnakes can



therefore be influenced by the location of food when it is near habitats they already prefer, but competition does not seem to affect their habitat selection decisions.

These three studies demonstrate that temperature and habitat structure are both important to habitat selection by gartersnakes, but food is only marginally important. Food is likely not an important aspect of habitat suitability for snakes because they often eat large meals infrequently. The larger the food item, the longer it takes to digest and the longer the energy from the food item lasts. In this way, snakes only have to look for food infrequently, and, on average, are not selecting habitat based on food.

Although other species of snakes will have preferences for different types of habitat structure, the importance of temperature and the unimportance of food will likely be the same for all northern snakes. For example, northern watersnakes, unlike gartersnakes, prefer aquatic habitats, but other studies have demonstrated that watersnakes spend quite a bit of time basking in order to maintain high body temperatures (Brown and Weatherhead 2000). Competition appearing to have little or no impact on northern snakes has also been suggested by other authors studying northern snakes (Harvey and Weatherhead 2006). Other studies have looked for effects of food abundance on habitat selection by northern snakes, but have either found no evidence (Blouin-Demers and Weatherhead 2001b) or relatively weak evidence (Robertson and Weatherhead 1992). In all of these studies, one point remains clear: temperature and habitat structure are very important to northern snakes.

### Acknowledgements

This research is part of my PhD thesis in biology at the University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Gabriel Blouin-Demers. This research would not have been possible without the enthusiastic help from my field assistants: P. Fassina, S. Karabatsos, F. Lanoix, and M. Routh. This research was supported by the University of Ottawa, a research grant from the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Post-Graduate Scholarship, and a NSERC Discovery Grant to Gabriel Blouin-Demers.

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# Have Salamanders Declined in Eastern Ontario?<sup>1</sup>

*David Seburn*



Amphibian populations are known to be declining around the world, with one-third of all known species threatened with extinction. Although amphibian declines are often associated only with frogs, salamanders are also declining. The cause or causes of these declines remain uncertain, although disease, pollution, invasive species, habitat loss, and climate change are all probable causes. Salamander declines are important as salamanders are a critical component of forest ecosystems. The biomass of woodland salamanders can be greater than that of birds or small mammals in some areas. Salamanders are also significant predators of forest floor invertebrates and their loss from forest ecosystems could have significant effects on invertebrate diversity, soil dynamics and nutrient cycling.

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<sup>1</sup> A project supported by the OFNC Research Fund

The Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (ORAA), run by Ontario Nature, is documenting the current distribution of amphibians and reptiles across Ontario, using 10x10 km grid squares, similar to the provincial Breeding Bird Atlas. The ORAA is a citizen science project that relies on volunteer observers, researchers and land managers. Over 2500 people have contributed more than 350,000 records. The data from the ORAA indicate that salamanders have declined significantly. For example, the Eastern Red-backed Salamander has no recent records (reports from the last 20 years) from over 400 grid squares where it was historically known to occur. In other words, this species may have been eliminated from more than 400 grid squares (more than 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>), which is an area larger than the entire country of Switzerland. Similar trends in atlas data have also been found for other woodland salamanders such as the Blue-spotted Salamander, Spotted Salamander, and Eastern Newt. Although salamanders may have declined, it is also possible that they have been under-reported from a lack of surveys.

To determine if salamanders have declined, Erin Mallon of Ontario Nature and I conducted surveys for salamanders in 25 grid squares across eastern Ontario lacking reports of Red-backed Salamanders in the last 20 years (Figure 1). Our method was simple: we spent one hour searching under logs and woody debris for salamanders in suitable habitat in each of the grid squares. After a week of surveying for salamanders on Crown land and in provincial parks, we had lifted and checked under nearly 4000 objects. It was worth it though, as we found Red-backed Salamanders in more than 80% of the squares we surveyed. We also collected valuable observations of other woodland salamanders, allowing us to update the distribution maps for those species.

Our results were extremely clear. A one hour survey in a grid square was able to detect the Red-backed Salamander over 80% of the time. Likely if we had surveyed for more than one hour, or at more than one site per 10x10 km grid square, we would have detected Red-backed Salamanders in a greater percentage of the grid squares. These results indicate that the main explanation for the lack of recent records of Red-backed Salamanders across eastern Ontario is a lack of survey effort. It was not hard to find salamanders. In some squares we found Red-backed Salamanders under the first cover object we checked. Access to land wasn't limiting surveys either, as a number of the squares where we found Red-backed Salamanders were in provincial parks. So why are salamanders not reported from more grid squares? We think there are a few reasons, but the main one is likely the cryptic nature of salamanders. For example, basking turtles can be easily seen on logs in wetlands, but locating salamanders usually requires actively searching under cover objects.

The good news is that it appears that salamanders (at least Red-backed Salamanders) remain widespread across eastern Ontario. The results have also shown that despite

having over 350,000 records of amphibians and reptiles the atlas still does not have a detailed understanding of the current distribution of all our species. Detailed maps for Ontario's amphibians and reptiles can be found on the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas website:

[http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/reptiles\\_and\\_amphibians/index.php](http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/reptiles_and_amphibians/index.php)

If you have salamanders on your property please consider submitting your observations to the atlas.

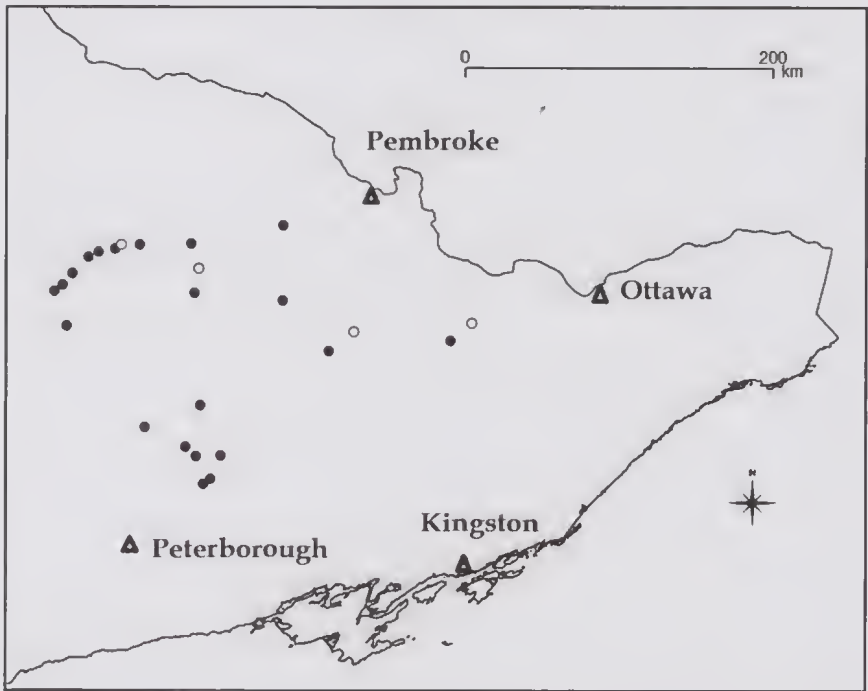


Figure 1. Location of survey sites for salamanders in eastern Ontario. Solid circles indicate Eastern Red-back Salamanders detected and open circles indicate they were not detected.

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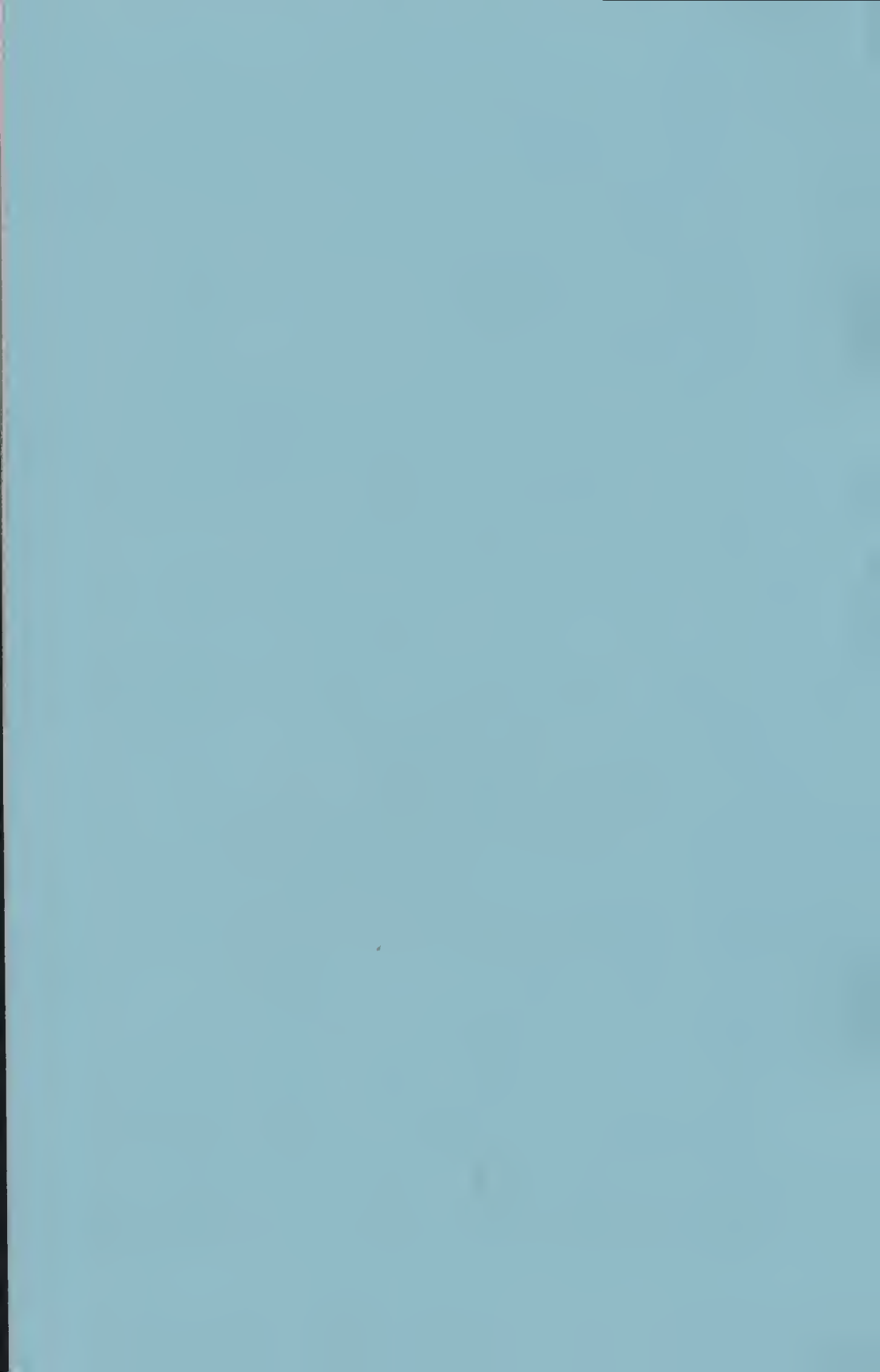
# A Naturalist's Year—12 months

*Roy John*

The sites given below are covered in Dan Brunton's "Nature and Natural Areas in Canada's Capital" [available from OFNC] or you can search the web site link <http://www.ofnc.ca/birding/wheretogo/index.html>.

	Location and Anticipated Sightings
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Follow up on Christmas Bird Count sightings</li><li>-Ottawa and Rideau Rivers for ducks - Common and Barrow's Goldeneye, mergansers</li><li>-Feeders at Duck Club [March Valley Rd], Hilda Road, Jack Pine Trail [P9 parking lot], Anderson Road [see <a href="http://www.ofnc.ca/birding.php">http://www.ofnc.ca/birding.php</a> for list of winter feeding stations]</li><li>-Richmond area for Snowy Owls and Snow Buntings [Shea, Brownlee and Akins Roads]</li></ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Dunrobin and Old Carp Road for owls and hawks</li><li>-Richmond area for Snowy Owls and Snow Buntings</li></ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Richmond area for Horned Larks</li><li>-Ottawa River for ducks and eagles</li><li>-Rideau River near Billing's Bridge for ducks</li><li>-Bear Brook for ducks and geese</li><li>-Mud Lake [Britannia Conservation Area] for early spring migrants</li></ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Behind airport for Woodcock [Bowesville Rd]</li><li>-Richmond sewage lagoons for water birds</li><li>-Shirley's Bay [feeders] for finches and [shore] for ducks and loons</li><li>-Champlain Lookout for Hawks, buntings</li></ul>





# OFNC AWARDS NIGHT



**PLACE: St. Basil's Parish Church**

940 Rex Avenue, Ottawa (GPS Address: 899 Maitland Avenue). This is on east side of Maitland Ave., 200 m north of the Queensway.

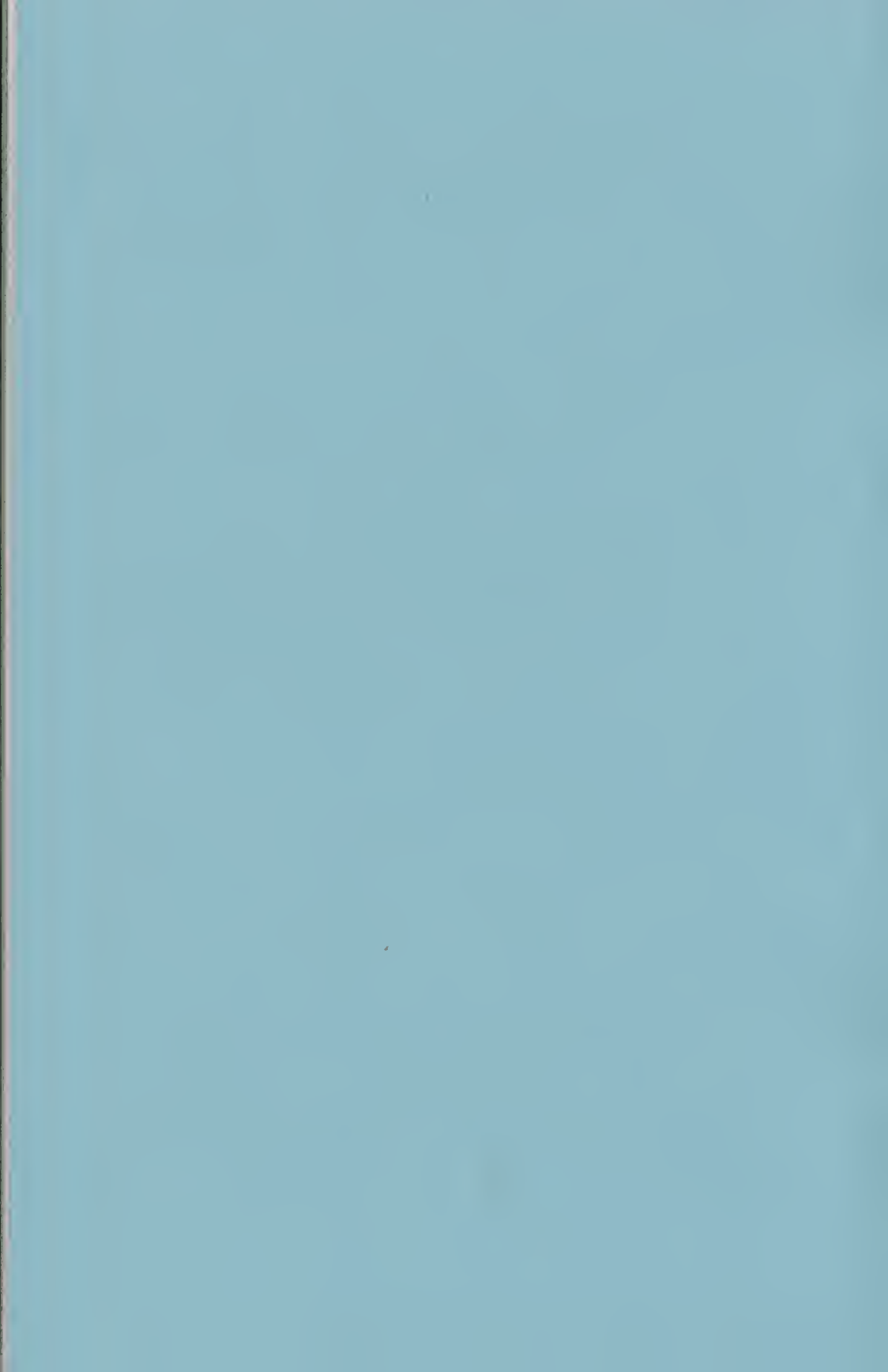
**BUS ACCESS:** Bus # 85 (along Carling Ave.) and get off at Maitland Ave. Walk 500 m south along Maitland (towards Queensway). St. Basil's is on the left (east side). Or take bus number 156 along Maitland to St. Basil's.

**ADMISSION: Free**

# Wine & Cheese Social

## Saturday, 2 April 2016, 7:00 p.m.

- Celebrate this year's Award winners.
- Join us at our annual social evening and meet fellow area naturalists.
- Enjoy wines, non-alcoholic punch, cheese & crackers, fruits & vegetables, desserts, tea & coffee.
- Call out answers to our despotic nature quiz. If you have anything that you would like to include in the quiz, please bring it along.
- Bid on silent auction items. To donate natural history books etc. for auction call Fenja at 613-723-2054.
- See this year's art displays.
- Member photographers, painters and other artists are invited to exhibit their works for attendees to judge. Photo contest submissions: **Digital only**. Please send up to three images (1 mb maximum) to humedgl (at) gmail.com by 20 March, 2016. Photos should be taken by you in Ontario or Quebec, and nature themed. Other art may be brought to the event as physical objects. There will be small prizes.
- We invite Macoun Field Club members and children (under 18 years) to bring and present natural history displays.



	Location and Anticipated Sightings
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mud Lake and Vincent Massey Park for spring migrants – sparrows</li> <li>-Mud Lake and Hog's Back area for spring migrants – ducks, warblers</li> <li>-Mud Lake for spring migrants – orioles, warblers, ducks, geese and vireos</li> <li>-Bill Mason Centre for rails, snipe and bittern</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Behind airport for sparrows [Bowesville Rd]</li> <li>-Gatineau Park for buntings</li> <li>-Tadpole Marsh [Marais aux Grenouillettes ]QC for marsh birds</li> <li>-Bill Mason Centre for rails, snipe, woodpeckers, and Eastern Chipmunks</li> <li>-Chaffey's Locks for rare passerines</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Larose Forest for breeding birds</li> <li>-Sewage lagoons at Alfred, Casselman, St. Isadore, Embrun, Richmond, St. Albert for shorebirds</li> <li>-Mer Bleue for nesting birds and bog flowers</li> <li>-Constance Bay Sand Hills for nesting birds</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Moodie Drive Gravel Pits – gulls, ducks and geese</li> <li>-Vincent Massey Park for fall migrants</li> <li>-Petrie Island for migrants</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mud Lake for fall migrants – shorebirds</li> <li>-Shirley's Bay for ducks and loons</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Low-Poltimore Road for winter finches</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Andrew Hayden and Dick Bell parks for ducks, geese and shorebirds</li> <li>-Milton Rd for Sandhill Cranes</li> <li>-Shirley's Bay [feeders] for finches and [shore] for ducks and loons</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Trail Road dump - gulls</li> <li>-FWG for finches</li> <li>-Christmas! [4 calling birds, 3 French hens, 2 turtle doves and a partridge]</li> </ul>

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# The Tubercled Orchid: Tenacity of the Hunt—Serendipity in the End

Henry Steger

My interest in native (and alien) flowering plants began when the family rented a cottage on the Ottawa River in August 1981. The cottage was part of a large, no-longer active farm and I took this opportunity to explore the fields and woodlands. For the first time I noticed the rich diversity of plant life, in particular the bevy of different flowering plants and I rushed out to buy Newcombe's (1997) Wildflower Guide to identify them.

I decided that winter that, beginning 1982, I would try to locate, identify and photograph as many of the wildflowers, according to Newcombe, occurring locally I could as a challenge. Of course, this challenge soon became a hobby in amateur botany and an equally important a source of much exercise.

Growing tropical orchids is a hobby, so my interest in local wildflowers naturally focused on native orchids. Between 1982 and 1987, I found most local orchids—some easily, others in out-of-the-way, difficult habitats such as fens and swamps. A couple, the Tubercled Orchid (*Platanthera flava*) and Auricled Orchid (*Listera auriculata*) eluded me. The latter is rare in our region and I accepted my chances of finding it were low to zero. I did however find *L.auriculata* in 1989 on the sandy banks of the Pancake River north of Sault Ste Marie.

According to Joyce and Allan Reddoch, *Platanthera flava* var. *herbiola* is near the northern edge of its range in the Deciduous and Mixed Forest Regions (Reddoch and Reddoch 1997). Within the Ottawa District, most discoveries of *P. flava* have taken place on the north and south shores of the Ottawa River upstream from Ottawa. The orchid prefers moist, open or partly shaded areas on the flood plains of the Ottawa River and some tributaries. On these flood plains, several zones are occupied: open, grassy and weedy beaches not far above the summer waterline; shrub zone edges facing the water; clearings in willow thickets; and forest floors under Red Maple, Silver Maple (and their hybrids) and Red Ash. Soils are sandy or silty. Colonies have been known on the river shore in the Britannia area for several decades.



In 2005, Dan Brunton reported the past and possible continued presence of *Platanthera flava* at Shirley's Bay (Watts Creek), Constance Creek and the Britannia Conservation Area although he surmised that the orchid had been extirpated at Britannia (Brunton 2005). He recently informed me that his last record for *P. flava*

was at Beatty Point in the 1980s (Brunton 2015).



Figure 1. Entire plant.

Petawawa Fish Culture Station and Presqu'ile Provincial Park where this orchid had previously been reported (Walc 1997), again without success. At the end of 2004, I decided no more special trips for *P. flava*.

In July 2006, I went to Shirley's Bay to photograph Stout Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*) growing in a meadow, a relict Prairie, east of the boat launching area (Catling and Kostiuk 2011). On this day, when I finished my photography, I again walked a barely discernible path that diagonally crisscrossed the meadow. I wasn't paying attention to the plant life since I had often searched this area in the past but on this day, I glimpsed a yellowish-green something in the middle of the path just before I put my foot down. Shazaam! It was a 9-inch tall plant of *Platanthera flava* in full bloom. I subsequently found two more blooming plants all growing within a foot of each other in or at the edge of the path partially shaded by a one and one half foot high Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) and a similar sized Dogwood (*Cornus amomum* ssp. *obliqua*). Figures 1 and 2 show a plant and a close-up of the flowers. The plant is called Tubercled Orchid because of the prominent protuberance on the lip of the flower.

The *Platanthera flava* plants were in a fairly open, grassy area of the meadow on the landward side of the shrub zone edge facing the water. The meadow is divided

Between 1988 and 2004, I made a concerted effort to find *Platanthera flava*. I paid two or three visits in the first three weeks of July to the Britannia Conservation Area and the Shirley's Bay area but always without success. In 1991 and 1993, respectively, I explored the Ottawa River shoreline at the

roughly in half by a trail (“the central trail”) leading to the water’s edge. The orchid plants were approximately 20 feet to the west of the central trail. The dominant grasses are Indian-grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and Little Blue-stem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), both characteristic prairie species (Brunton 2015). Other accompanying plants are Sneezeweed

(*Helenium autumnale*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Kalm’s Lobelia (*Lobelia kalmii*) and the rare Field Horsetail (*Equisetum pratense*) (Brunton 2015).



Figure 2. Close-up of flowers

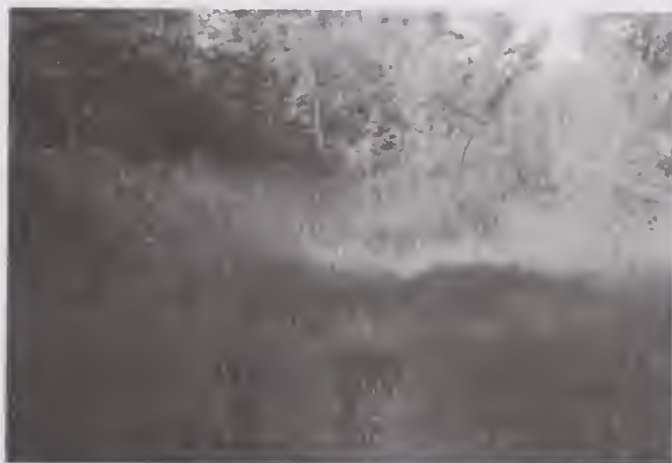


Figure 3. The Meadow.

Figure 3 is a photograph taken by Dan Brunton on September 26, 2015. In 2006, there were fewer shrubs and those present were smaller. Conditions were less shady and the grass covering was less dense. The path along which *Platanthera flava* was located on the west side of the central trail has filled in and is no longer

visible. I conclude that the path has been unused for some time—other than by me. The path to the east of the central trail however remains open, mainly because it is a shortcut to a larger trail going east.

I have paid periodic visits to keep current on the status of *Platanthera flava* at this site. The results are below. Visits occurred in July unless otherwise noted. Three observations are obvious: (1) The population is variable, (2) *P. flava* is moving eastward, and (3) for some unknown reason *P. flava* appears to have a preference to cluster along the former path even though it now exists only in my memory. This last observation may reflect the findings of Catling and Kostiuk (2011) that orchids showed a consistent and significant increased abundance within the disturbance zone of bare hiking trails, although in the present instance the path has always been very narrow, not bare, and infrequently used.

Year	No. Plants	Comments
2006	3	
2007	7	In a 9 foot long line along the path.
2008	17	Thirteen in a line along the path. Four slightly to the east up to 5 feet off the path.
2009	-	No visit.
2010	6	Four along the path. Two plants 3 feet south of original location.
2011	1	Three feet south of original location. Late August.
2012	0	
2013	-	No visit.
2014	5	Near original site along the path.
2015	21	14 plants along a 16 foot long line with plants less than 1.5 feet from the path. Three plants about 4 feet from the path. One on the west side of the intersection of the path and the central trail. Three plants at the edge of the path ~11 feet to the east of the central trail— <b>July 9, 2015.</b>

I revisited the meadow on September 25, 2015 and re-located two of the three plants east of the central trail. I was able to find only four of the 18 plants to the west of

the central trail. I should note that I didn't spend much time looking because the plants are much more difficult to see once the yellowish-green blossoms have become green seed pods and because these plants grow in sunnier conditions, they mature and become bare stems sooner. D. Brunton searched the site on September 26, 2015 but found only two *Platanthera flava* plants (Brunton 2015). He did however discover at least another seven plants farther to the east of the meadow. They were in a shadier spot where the plants had developed more slowly and were in fresher condition. Combining my total of July with that of D. Brunton, more than two dozen plants of *P. flava* plants were found. It's reasonable to assume that *P. flava* is secure at this "extended" site in the near future.

Encouraged by my find of July 9, 2015 of the largest number of *Platanthera flava* plants, I continued on and visited a different meadow (relict prairie) west of the boat launching area at Shirley's Bay, approximately 1 km west of the first site. I had searched this meadow many times in the past. To my surprise I found *P. flava* for the first time—a sole specimen. I now have two areas to follow-up in future. And perhaps it is time to re-visit other suitable spots at Shirley's Bay where I haven't found *P. flava* in the past!

### Acknowledgment

The author thanks Dan Brunton for permission to use the photograph of the meadow (Figure 3), for pointing out the reference to the article by Paul M. Catling and Brenda Kostiuk and for suggestions on plant naming practices in the literature.

### Bibliography

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# Code of Conduct

## for birders, birdwatchers, and photographers

ALWAYS RESPECT WILDLIFE, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND OTHER PEOPLE

Birdwatching and nature photography are becoming ever more popular. The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club's Birds Committee and the RA Photo Club Nature Group suggest the following guidelines so that disturbance to birds and other wildlife is minimized and so that all can enjoy the birds.

THE WELFARE OF THE BIRDS MUST COME BEFORE OUR OWN INTERESTS.

- Always remember: You are not the only one who may be observing.
- Always consider your impact on birds. They are most likely already under stress when MIGRATING, on NESTS or breeding sites, and FEEDING. Predatory birds (such as herons, hawks and especially owls) are also susceptible to stress.
- Keep a good distance away and do not linger. Imagine that a bird has "personal space" that should be respected. If you note any signs of agitation from the bird, move away immediately.
- Avoid flushing birds. If you are trying to attract a bird, be mindful of the hazards they may face. For example, avoid placing bird feeders close to windows or luring birds out to roads with heavy traffic.
- Use flash photography only with DISCRETION AND CAUTION. Nocturnal birds are particularly sensitive. Avoid repeatedly disturbing birds, especially those that have already been frequently photographed.
- Using recordings or imitating calls around birds on breeding territory may also cause undue stress at a very vulnerable time in their lives and should be avoided, and in general kept to a minimum.
- Do not announce the location of RARE breeding birds. Record details of your observations and consider submitting a report to the appropriate Records Committee (in Ontario—the Ontario Nest Records Scheme at the Royal Ontario Museum Tel: 416-586-5523; Fax: 416-586-5553).



- Stay away from active nests. Do not attempt to view or photograph nests with incubated eggs or hatchlings. Nests are very vulnerable and can easily fail if disturbed. Avoid gathering in large groups at nest sites, and do not linger at these sites.
- If LEADING a group (professional or amateur), ensure that members of your group know and understand the Code of Conduct. Lead by example. Professional tour companies must bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of the birds first, even if it means that rarities are not seen.
- Never disturb the environment, damage property, or leave garbage. Be quiet and respectful. Respect private property and always obtain landowner permission to enter. If asked to leave an area, do so immediately, and courteously.
- Stay on established trails. Don't block other peoples' views—this interferes with their right to see/enjoy the birds too. Never block laneways, roads, or any other form of access to other people.
- Always abide by rules and regulations in areas such as National or Provincial Parks, Regional or Local Conservation Areas, etc.

ITS UP TO YOU TO HELP PROMOTE RESPECT TOWARD THE  
WILDLIFE, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND OTHER PEOPLE.

**Editor's Note:** This code has been published previously, and is currently on the OFNC website. This is a reminder of what the OFNC believes in.



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# Wanted! Impresario for Sunday Afternoons at FWG

The Impresario is a rare bird. It organizes the other birds and spreads word of new opportunities to all the other creatures in the forest . . .

Imagine a schedule of public walks or workshops at FWG on summer Sunday afternoons. There are microscopes there, a pond, beauty, diversity, and lots of birds. And several OFNC members who might enjoy leading a casual nature walk or a friendly workshop. Maybe we could make FWG the place to be on Sunday afternoons. Is there someone who could organize us into a schedule or program? If that could be you, please contact [education@ofnc.ca](mailto:education@ofnc.ca).

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# Coming Events

Arranged by the OFNC Events Committee  
For further information, please check our website  
[www.ofnc.ca](http://www.ofnc.ca)

**PLEASE NOTE:** The OFNC website ([ofnc.ca](http://www.ofnc.ca)) contains the most up-to-date information on events. Please check it regularly for changes or additions to events. The Club's Facebook site <<http://www.facebook.com/groups/379992938552/>> and Twitter account <[@OttawaFieldNat](#)> will also be used to announce last minute changes to events. **Note that we anticipate having several weather and year-dependent events that are not included in *Trail & Landscape* and will only be announced at the last minute via our website, Facebook and Twitter.** These include seasonal events such as Snowy Owl viewing, the spring Snow Goose spectacle, Eardley Eagles and Mudpuppy Night.

**ALL OUTINGS:** Field trips to natural areas in our region and beyond take place all year round. These events are for OFNC members and prospective members. Prospective members are welcome unless the notice indicates that participation is limited, or that bus travel is involved. Guests should be aware that, in all cases, OFNC liability insurance applies to OFNC members only. Times stated for events are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, please contact the leader.

Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.

**MONTHLY MEETINGS:** Beginning in February 2014, our monthly meetings will be held at the **Central Experimental Farm in the K.W. Neatby Building, Salon B, at 960 Carling Avenue**. There is ample free parking in the lot on the West side of Maple Drive by Carling Ave., immediately to the east of the main entrance to the Neatby Building.

**EVENTS ORIENTED TO ALL AGES:** Kids are welcome on all of our trips. We have highlighted particular hikes as "oriented to all ages" as these are most likely to be enjoyed by typical children. Depending on your child(ren)'s interests and stamina, please feel free to bring them along on any events. For events tailored to kids, check out the Macoun Field Club (<http://www.ofnc.ca/macoun/index.php>).

**Saturday**  
**16 January**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**to**  
**10:00 p.m.**

### **MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHY NIGHT**

**\*oriented to all ages\***

**Leaders:** Barry Cottam and Hume Douglas

**Location:** K.W. Neatby Building, 960 Carling Ave.

**Description:** If you take natural history photos, this is your opportunity to share some of your images with fellow members. The mix of different topics and voices makes for an enjoyable evening. Contributions may be 7-10 minutes long. We can handle most digital presentations (images on a flash-drive), and even conventional slides (with some warning please). We encourage presenters to speak about their images. Please contact Hume Douglas (*humedgl (at) gmail.com*) or Barry Cottam (*b.cottam (at) rogers.com*) so that we can organize the presentations.

**Sunday**  
**24 January**  
**2:00 p.m.**  
**to**  
**4:00 p.m.**

### **WINTER WARMUP TOUR AT FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN (FWG) AND THE AROBORETUM**

**Leader:** Owen Clarkin

**Meet:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre.

**Description:** Looking for a winter activity to keep you warm? We will take a mid-winter tour of the interesting landscape (plants and hopefully animals) at the grounds of Fletcher Wildlife Garden and the adjacent Dominion Arboretum. This event will be an "active," no-stopping whirlwind tour. The combination of dressing for warmth and the lack of standing still should keep all attendees warm. The Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre may be used as a brief warm-up spot at the midway point of the tour if necessary. Dress adequately for the weather. Snowshoes could be useful but are likely not required.

**Saturday**  
**30 January**  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**to**  
**1:00 p.m.**

### **PREPARING FOR HIKES IN WINTER WEATHER**

**Leader:** Jakob Mueller (Contact: *jm890\_7 (at) hotmail.com* or 613-314-1495)

**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre

**Description:** Winter weather can be harsh and unforgiving. Inadequate preparation for a winter hike can lead to problems ranging from discomfort to severe danger. Humans evolved in more mild climates than what we experience in Ottawa, and winter survival skills are not just innate knowledge. Jakob will lead a tutorial on how to prepare for and deal with winter conditions while hiking, so you can not only be safe, but even enjoy your time outside. This will begin inside, followed by an outdoor portion and a walk around the FWG grounds.

**Monday**  
**1 February**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
to  
**8:30 p.m.**

### **BRINGING MOTHS TO LIGHT**

**Presenters:** Jim des Rivières and Richard Webster

**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre.

**Description:** Jim is an acclaimed moth photographer whose large-format images of Ottawa area moths have been exhibited at the Canadian Museum of Nature and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and are now touring museums across Canada. Richard is a postdoctoral researcher at the Carleton University Biology department whose doctoral dissertation was on moth camouflage. They will be showing photographs of local moths and reporting on their OFNC-supported experiment conducted this summer. Their work explores whether ultraviolet LEDs can attract moths. Their goal is to develop moth lights that are both portable and affordable.

**Sunday**  
**7 February**  
**9:00 a.m.**  
to  
**12:00 Noon**

### **BEGINNERS' GUIDE TO NATURE**

**\*Oriented to all ages\***

**Leaders:** Dave Moore and Bev McBride.

**Meet:** Jack Pine Trail, P9 parking lot. This event is limited to 15 participants. Please register with Dave at [redstart@vif.com](mailto:redstart@vif.com) or leave a message with your name and number at 613-729-9330. Please include a phone number in your email in case we have to cancel.

**Description:** Join Dave and Bev to find out about nature in the winter. Kids are invited. Bring unsalted peanuts or sunflower seeds to pay the chickadees for using their habitat. This trip will depend on the weather, so if it looks bad it will be cancelled. Dress warmly for the weather as there is time spent standing still. Bring a snack, your camera and/or binoculars. No mosquitoes, guaranteed!

**Tuesday**  
**9 February**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Social**

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**  
**BIRD COLLISIONS IN OTTAWA**

**Speaker:** Anouk Hoedeman, Safe Wings Ottawa

**Location:** Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central  
Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue

**7:30 p.m.**  
**Presentation**

**Description:** Building collisions are a leading human cause of avian mortality, killing as many as a billion birds per year in North America, including perhaps one million in Ottawa. Anouk, founder of Safe Wings Ottawa (formerly FLAP - Ottawa Wing), will explain why birds collide with buildings, and share strategies to prevent collisions at home and at your workplace. She will also talk about how she and other volunteers are researching and raising awareness of the problem, and discuss what we can do as a city to create a safer human-built environment for birds.

**Saturday**  
**13 February**  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**to**  
**2:00 p.m.**

**ANIMAL TRACKING**

**Leader:** Carolyn Callaghan (819) 455-1087

**Meet:** 9:00 a.m. near the Pizza Pizza in the northeast corner of the Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre parking lot (Richmond Road at Assaly Road) **OR** 10:00 a.m. at 611 chemin Cregheur, Luskville QC.

**Description:** Join Carolyn on an outing as we look for tracks of some of the following species: weasel, deer, wolf, mice, pine marten, porcupine, squirrel, moose and otter. She will give an introductory talk and provide reference materials prior to the walk. Bring a lunch and a hot drink. Dress for the weather. Snowshoes are recommended, warm boots are acceptable if the snow is not too deep. Bring your animal track guide books to enrich your knowledge.

If there is a storm or significant snowfall on Saturday, i.e. more than a centimetre, ending less than 8 hours before the start time, the event will be moved to Sunday, 14 February. If in doubt, call Carolyn.



**Saturday**  
**20 February**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
**to**  
**2:00 p.m.**

### **SNOWSHOE IN MER BLEUE**

**Leader:** Jakob Mueller (Contact: *jm890\_7 (at) hotmail.com* or 613-314-1495)

**Meet:** 9:30 a.m. beside the Pizza Pizza in the northeast corner of the Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre parking lot (Richmond Road at Assaly Road) **OR** 10:00 a.m. at NCC parking lot P20 off Anderson Road.

**Description:** Get some exercise and explore nature in winter in Ottawa's Greenbelt. We will look for wildlife activity and take in winter landscapes and fresh air. Snowshoes are a convenient way to explore NCC trails in winter—bring your own, or rent from one of the many sporting goods suppliers in Ottawa. Pack a lunch, a drink, and dress in layers. In the unlikely event that there is no snow pack, this event will be cancelled.

**Wednesday**  
**2 March**  
**8:00 a.m.**  
**to**  
**12:00 Noon**

### **BEGINNER BIRDING IN WINTER—FOREST BIRDS AND WINTER GULLS**

**Leaders:** Rick Collins and Heather Pickard

**Meet:** 8 a.m. at the Jack Pine Trail at Stony Swamp, parking lot 9 on Moodie Drive.

**Description:** This event is a guided bird walk for beginners to birding. Ottawa's Greenbelt trails are alive with birds in winter, especially where bird feeders supply a reliable source of food. At Jack Pine Trail we can expect to find many species on which to practice basic identification skills. Your leaders will discuss how to apply the **FOUR KEYS to BIRD IDENTIFICATION** to the birds we find: 1- size and shape, 2- colour pattern, 3- habitat, and 4- behaviour. After exploring the forest trails we will drive to the nearby landfill or fields to seek winter gulls, and perhaps a few raptors. Bring your binoculars, a snack, warm drink, and dress for the weather. This event will be cancelled in event of hazardous driving conditions or extreme weather.



Sunday  
6 March  
9:45 a.m.  
to  
3:00 p.m.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SKI OUTING IN LIMERICK FOREST**  
**Leader:** Stew Hamill (613 269-3415)  
**Meet:** 9:45 a.m. at Lincoln Fields parking lot, northeast corner near Pizza Pizza (Richmond Rd. and Assaly Rd.) for carpooling and directions **OR** 11:00 a.m. at the Limerick Forest Interpretive Centre, 1175 Limerick Road, North Grenville ON.  
**Description:** This is a 7-km flatland cross-country ski loop starting at the Limerick Forest Interpretive Centre. The route passes through both natural and plantation forests, crosses a provincially significant wetland, and goes by a Ducks Unlimited Pond, an active beaver lodge, and areas where tree plantations have recently been thinned. This outing will be coordinated with the Friends of Limerick Forest (*limerickforest.ca*). Bring a lunch. Dress for the weather. The event may be cancelled if there is a snowstorm and freezing rain.

Tuesday  
8 March  
7:00 p.m.  
Social  
  
7:30 p.m.  
Presentation

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**  
**NATURAL HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA**  
**Speakers:** Alexander, Angela and Jeff Skevington  
**Location:** Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue.  
We recently spent five months in Australia. It was a research trip to study insects, but we managed to include all aspects of natural history. This talk will introduce you to a slightly different way to see Australia. We purchased a truck, camped the entire time and tended to go to places not on the regular tour route. We will certainly highlight the birds and mammals but will also show you some of the amazing insects that we found there. We will also try to give different perspectives on the trip. All of us had different highlights and expectations. Alexander (age 11) will present a 10-15 minute talk that will focus on a young naturalist's first experience with the dry continent. Jeff will then give a general overview from his point of view. Undoubtedly, Angela will interject when Jeff's interpretations stray from reality.

**Saturday**  
**19 March**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**to**  
**8:30 p.m.**

**WILDLIFE IN SRI LANKA AND OTTAWA—VIDEOS  
AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

**Presenter:** Jeewa Mendis

**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre, off  
Prince of Wales Drive.

Jeewa is a skilled field naturalist with an amazing amount of  
patience and a keen eye for photographing unusual subjects.  
She will be showing her latest photographs and short videos  
taken in Sri Lanka and near Ottawa.

**Sunday**  
**20 March**  
**1:00 p.m.**  
**to**  
**3:00 p.m.**

**TAKING BETTER NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS**

**Leader:** Victor Rakmil

**Meet:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre, at the  
Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Take the service road on the east  
side of Prince of Wales across from the Canadian Agriculture  
and Food Museum paid parking lot. There is some parking at  
the Interpretative Centre and more parking by the ball  
diamond.

**Description:** Victor Rakmil is an experienced amateur  
photographer. He writes a daily blog on photography  
(*rakmilphotography.wordpress.com*), and has a dedicated  
website (*rakmilphotography.com*). Victor will give an  
overview of what makes for great nature photography  
(including birds and other animals), give tips for nature  
photography and discuss digital photography basics. The  
presentation will cover birds, animals, insects, filling the frame,  
getting good backgrounds, and telling a story with photographs.  
He will also briefly discuss good practice and ethics for nature  
photography, particularly finding animals and how to minimize  
your impact on them. The object is to discuss technique not  
gear. It's an opportunity to talk about what works for you and  
ask questions about nature photography.

**Tuesday**  
**21 March**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Social**  
  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Formal**  
**Meeting**

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING  
137<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretative Centre.

**Description:** The Council for 2016 will be elected at this  
meeting. There will be a brief review of the activities in 2015  
and a statement of the Club's finances presented. This is an  
opportunity to meet most of the Club's executive and  
Committee Chairs to find out what makes your Club tick.

Saturday  
2 April  
7:00 p.m.  
to  
10:00 p.m.

#### **OFNC AWARDS NIGHT**

**\*Especially Kid friendly\***

**Location:** St. Basil's Parish Church, 940 Rex Ave, Ottawa  
Enter from Maitland Avenue (east side) just north of the  
Queensway.

**Description:** Join us for some fun at our annual wine and cheese party and celebrate with the honoured winners of our Annual Awards. Photographers and artists will exhibit new works for everyone to enjoy. The judged photo display will be digital only. Kids, bring your natural history displays. The Natural History Trivia Quiz will be back, also in a new digital format. For information and submissions contact Hume at 613-234-0122 or [humedgl\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:humedgl(at)gmail.com). Please see also notice at centre pages of *Trail & Landscape*.

Sunday  
10 April  
1:00 p.m.  
to  
4:00 p.m.

#### **TWIGS: INTRODUCTION TO THE FINGERPRINT OF WOODY PLANTS**

**Leader:** Owen Clarkin

**Meet:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG) Interpretative Centre.

**Description:** What's that tree or shrub? This event will focus on introducing you to what's perhaps the most definitive dimension of woody plant identification: the winter twig. This will be a combined indoor-outdoor event. We will begin with an hour-long introduction (lecture + hands-on twig samples) inside the FWG Interpretative Centre. We will then explore the grounds of FWG and the Arboretum, focussing on how we can inspect the twigs of trees and shrubs we encounter to reveal their identities. Standard tools such as a field camera, measuring tape, loupe, and field guides could be useful but are not required. This is a rain or shine event.

Tuesday  
12 April  
7:00 p.m.  
Social  
  
7:30 p.m.  
Presentation

#### **OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**

##### **CAVE ANIMALS**

**Speaker:** Prof. Stewart Peck

**Location:** Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central  
Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue.

**Description:** Join one of the world's leading cave biology experts on an exploration of underground life.

**Sunday**  
**17 April**  
**8:00 a.m.**  
**to**  
**12:00 Noon**

### **HOTSPOT BIRDING ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER**

**Leader:** Jon Ruddy

**Meet:** At 7:45 a.m. at Lincoln Field's parking lot (near Pizza Pizza).

**Description:** We will be bird watching in the Britannia Conservation Area and Mud Lake as well as making some stops along the Ottawa River at Ottawa Beach and Andrew Haydon east. Expect a nice mix of waterfowl and land birds. The first warblers may have arrived (Pine, Yellow-rumped and possibly Palm) and a variety of winter finches should still be present. Wear sturdy footwear, pack rain gear, bring a snack and some water and let's get out and enjoy some springtime birding in the Nation's Capital.

**Thursday**  
**12 May**  
**to**  
**Sunday**  
**15 May**

### **OFNC POINT PELEE BIRDING TRIP 2016**

**Leaders:** Roy John, John Cartwright and Jon Ruddy

**Description:** Our club is planning another fantastic birding trip to Point Pelee and Rondeau Provincial Parks with several stops in interesting birding places along the route there and back. We have booked rooms in the newly renovated Leamington Comfort Inn with buffet breakfast service. We shall charter an air conditioned bus with toilet facilities. We expect the cost to be about \$500/person. Look for more details on the OFNC website ([ofnc.ca](http://ofnc.ca)). Meantime, to secure your place on this trip, call Martha Farkas at 613 729-4619 or send an e-mail to [martha\\_farkas\[at\]rogers.com](mailto:martha_farkas[at]rogers.com).

*DEADLINE: Material intended for the April - June issue must be in the editor's hands by 1 February, 2015. Mail your manuscripts to:*

**Karen McLachlan Hamilton**  
**2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON, K2J 4S7**  
**H: (613) 838-4943; email: [hamilton@storm.ca](mailto:hamilton@storm.ca)**

### **ANY ARTICLES FOR TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?**

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations?

Write up your thoughts and send them to *Trail & Landscape*.

URL of our site:  
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[webmaster@ofnc.ca](mailto:webmaster@ofnc.ca)

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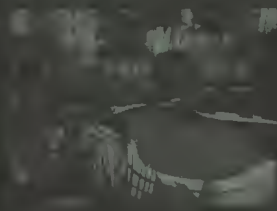
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ISSN 0041-0748



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## TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and Undeliverable Copies:

Box 35069, Westgate P.O.

Ottawa, K1Z 1A2

Return postage guaranteed

Printed by  
LOMOR PRINTING